



## News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **IT TAKES THE COURAGE AND STRENGTH OF A WARRIOR TO ASK FOR HELP**

DALLAS – For many, the holidays are an exciting time of year. Checking the gift list, guest list, grocery list - our lists have lists. Shopping and visiting with family and friends can be full of holiday cheer, but for many, the holidays are a time of sadness and desperation which can become overwhelming.

VA North Texas Health Care System is reaching out to veterans who feel they have no escape from feelings of depression or loneliness and may be considering suicide. Suicide prevention coordinators are available for assistance at VA facilities in Dallas, Bonham and Fort Worth where all veterans are screened to determine if they are at risk for suicide. Veterans who are found to be at high risk for suicide are followed extensively to ensure expeditious mental health treatment.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is constantly enhancing its efforts to help in this vital area of veteran health. In July 2007, VA established a national telephone crisis intervention lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK, where veterans are encouraged to call the lifeline and press 1. The telephone crisis hotline is staffed by trained professional counselors who are available 24-7 to veterans in crisis.

VA educates its employees and veteran service organization members on warning signs and risk factors associated with suicide as well as veterans and family members. But suicide prevention is everyone's business.

### **Know the Signs**

VA is engaging people in the community to become more aware of suicide prevention efforts by recognizing the key warning signs, then calling the lifeline when veterans exhibit these behaviors.

**– MORE –**

## **ADD ONE / Suicide Prevention**

- Talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Trying to get pills, guns, or other ways to harm oneself
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge
- Acting in a reckless or risky way
- Feeling trapped, like there is no way out
- Saying or feeling that there is no reason for living

Veterans at risk include those with previous suicide attempts, alcohol or substance abuse, history of mental illness, poor self control, recent loss of a loved one, job, relationship; family history of suicide, history of abuse, or serious health problems.

If you or someone you know is in an emotional crisis, call 1-800-273-TALK. Help is a phone call away.

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